

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9231

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 4226

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SHUM, ES
SUBJ: PARTIES OF THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION IN EL SALVADOR

1. IN RECENT YEARS, THE RESPONSIBLE POLITICAL OPPOSITION
IN EL SALVADOR HAS LARGELY BEEN REPRESENTED BY THE UNO
COALITION CONSISTING OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT PARTY
(PDC), THE NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT (MNR) AND
THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC UNION (UDN). SINCE MAY 1978
THIS COALITION HAS BEEN DEFUNCT, AND ITS MEMBERS-WHILE
MAINTAINING A CERTAIN RELATIONSHIP TO EACH OTHER-HAVE
GONE THEIR SEPARATE WAYS.

2. THE PDC, LIKE THE OTHER TWO PARTIES, ABSTAINED
FROM PARTICIPATION THE MARCH 12 ELECTION BUT HAS
SINCE EVIDENCED A READINESS FOR MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE
WITH THE GOES. IN THIS, THEY HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED AND
ASSISTED BY OURSELVES AND BY THE EMBASSY OF ITALY
(SAN SALVADOR 2527 AND 2648).
AS PART OF SUCH DIALOGUE, THEY HAVE NOW RELUCTANTLY
LISTED TO THE PRESENTATION BY GOES SPOKESMAN OF THE
FIVE YEAR PLAN AND ARE ANXIOUSLY AWAITING THEIR TURN TO
MAKE A PRESENTATION ON THE POLITICAL NEEDS OF THE

COUNTRY. AT A MEETING OF PARTY DIRECTORS IN GUATEMALA,
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THEY HAVE JUST DECIDED TO WORK TOWARD PARTICIPATION IN
THE 1980 ELECTION, PROVIDED AN ACCEPTABLE ELECTORAL
CLIMATE CAN BE ACHIEVED BEFOREHAND. (AS DEPARTMENT IS
AWARE, WE HAVE SUGGESTED (SAN SALVADOR 3773) THAT THIS
EMBASSY BEGIN NOW TO WORK TOWARD THAT SAME END).

3. THE MNR, IN THE PERSON OF ITS SECRETARY GENERAL,

GUILLERMO MANUEL UNGO, HAS MET FOR 90 MINUTES OF POLITICAL DIALOGUE WITH PRESIDENT ROMERO, ANTICIPATES OTHER SUCH MEETINGS IN THE FUTURE, AND HAS ACCEPTED OUR OFFER OF AN INTERNATIONAL VISITOR GRANT FOR LATER THIS YEAR.

4. THE UDN, A CLEARLY COMMUNIST-INFLUENCED PARTY, DEBATED FOR THREE DAYS WHETHER OR NOT TO ACCEPT OUR INVITATION TO THE FOURTH OF JULY RECEPTION, CONSULTED WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF EL SALVADOR (PCES), AND FINALLY OPTED NOT TO ATTEND ON THE GROUNDS THAT THIS WOULD RENDER IT TOO VULNERABLE TO CRITICISM AND ATTACK FROM THE PARTIES AND GROUPS OF THE EXTREME LEFT. AT THE SAME TIME, THE UDN LEADERSHIP AGREED AS TO THE DESIRABILITY OF CONTACT WITH THE AMERICAN EMBASSY AND SENT US A POLITE LETTER OF REGRET WHICH IMPLIED THIS SENTIMENT. WE PLAN, IN THE NEAR FUTURE, TO ACCOMMODATE THEIR DESIRE FOR A REASONABLE LEVEL OF QUIET CONTACT.

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